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Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies: The Formative Period, 1836–1851

Lawrence G. Coates

Brigham Young has been acclaimed as one of America's greatest colonizers, empire builders, and religious leaders, and there is no doubt that his achievements left an indelible imprint upon the pages of western frontier history. Many of his accomplishments, however, need to be seen against a silhouette of his experience with the native Americans. His relations with the Indians were more than pious expressions of good will or statements of empty dreams, hopes, and visions for the future of the Indians. They were also more than simple deeds of kindness or acts of violence. The relations of Brigham Young with the Indians were a blend of his social-religious-humanitarian philosophy and practical measures that he thought necessary for establishing the Mormon kingdom of God on earth.

Generally guided by his religious ideas that the natives descended from the Lamanites of Mormon scripture and by the philosophy that "it was cheaper to feed the Indians than fight them," Brigham Young used various peaceful means in dealing with them. Thinking intimate contact was practical, he traded material goods for the natives' fur, hides, horses, and children; he also sent colonists to live among them as a kind of "peace corps" to help them alter their way of life and to live in harmony with the Saints. He likewise used Church and government funds to provide food, clothing, and other material goods so that the Indians would become dependent upon the Mormon people and not be so eager to fight.

Even though he preferred to use peaceful means, he anticipated that conflicts would occur between the Saints and the Indians; so

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he urged his people to build forts for their protection. When the forts proved inadequate during periods of intense violence, he ordered the Nauvoo Legion to fight the "hostile" natives. Finally, when he realized that some Indian problems could not be solved either by military or peaceful means, he requested the federal government remove the Indians from the Great Basin to some remote unsettled region where the slow change of their life-style would be less troublesome.

**On the Plains**

Before the epic Mormon exodus from Nauvoo in 1846, Brigham Young's association with the Indians was limited. During the early months of 1835 he served a short mission to the Indians of western New York, became aware of the Indians who were being moved from the eastern states to the western lands known as the Indian Territory, and sympathized with their plight. He was in Nauvoo during the 1840s when some Sac, Fox, Potawatomi, and other Indians visited the Prophet Joseph Smith. Young personally knew the few Indians who joined the Mormon faith and moved to Nauvoo to be with the Saints. During this period, Brigham Young sealed two Indians, Lewis Dana and Mary Goat, "under the New and Everlasting Covenant for time and all eternity" in the Nauvoo Temple.

The first real test of Brigham Young's ability to gain and maintain peaceful and friendly relations with the Indians came during the exodus from Nauvoo, when he first began his "private Indian diplomacy." Believing it was necessary to establish friendly contact with the Indians prior to the exodus, he sent delegations of Mormon elders to the Indians in the West to arrange for the Saints to camp on Indian land while moving to the Great Basin, despite the fact that it was illegal for private persons to negotiate with Indians.

Nevertheless, Brigham Young, like Joseph Smith, sent Indian delegates Lewis Dana, George Herring, and a Brother Otis, as well as former white missionaries to the Indians, Daniel Spencer, Charles Shumway, Phineas Young, and S. Tindale, to make peace

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1. Diary of Brigham Young, 1832-36, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Historical Department). See also Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, [1949]), 2:222 (hereafter cited as HC).

2. For accounts of these visits, see HC 5:14, 67; 6:401-402; and Henry King to John Chambers, 14 July 1843; John Chambers to T. Hartley Crawford, 27 September 1843; and T. Hartley Crawford to John Chambers, 7 August 1843, in Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81 Iowa Superintendency, 1838-49. Microfilm copy located in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

with the natives. These men frequently carried letters or certificates telling the Indians of their missionary purpose. In the letter sent with Spencer and Shumway, Young certified that these were men of honor and reputation and that they had a special message from the Great Spirit for the Indian people. Reflecting on passages found in Mormon scripture, he promised that these good Mormon men would enlighten your minds with regard to ancient principles taught to your forefathers by the former prophets when the light of the Great Spirit shone forth on all your tribes and his glory shielded you from error. . . . We feel extremely anxious that you share in the . . . promised blessing to Israel and . . . we send you these our beloved brothers praying the Great Spirit to aid and bless them and asking you to grant them your assistance that your people may be enlightened with truth.5

While making the epic march across Iowa into Indian country, Brigham Young continued his private Indian diplomacy. When he reached a Potawatomi village located along a branch of the Nishabnatotna River in early June 1846, he held a powwow with the natives and asked permission to pass through their land. Surprised by the Indians' demand for payment for the grass the Mormon livestock would eat, and thinking this request was inspired by Mormon enemies, he offered instead to give them the building improvements and bridges the Saints planned to construct. The Indians accepted these terms, apparently thinking they would profit by charging fees to other travelers for using these facilities.6

Later in June, the pioneers reached the Trading Point, where Brigham Young met with several Indian chiefs, agent Robert B. Mitchell, and trader Peter A. Sarpy to discuss the Mormon exodus.7 Meanwhile, Captain James Allen arrived from the East to recruit 500 Mormons to fight in the recently declared war with Mexico.8 Considering this request an opportunity to prove their loyalty to the nation and also a chance to raise some money for crossing the plains, Young advised the Saints to volunteer for service. Because this loss of manpower made it difficult to cross the plains in 1846, the Mormon leader asked Captain Allen for permission to remain on Indian land, and Allen granted the request contingent upon President Polk's giving his approval, which he eventually did.9

4HC 7:374, 379, 401, 437, and 439-42.
5Ibid., 20 June 1846.
6Ibid., 28 June 1846.
7Ibid., 20 and 26 July; 1 and 9 August 1846.
Meanwhile, Brigham Young did not wait for the president’s authorization, but instead talked with several Potawatomi chiefs who gave permission for the Mormons to settle on their lands at Council Bluffs, Iowa. During these talks, Brigham Young gave them gifts and even invited some of them “to come over the mountains and see the Saints when they get located, and bring his men to hunt for us, and we would make them blankets, powder, cloth, etc.” During one conversation, Young discovered several Indians who had either met Joseph Smith at Nauvoo or had been visited by Mormon elders sent out before the Mormon exodus. These early contacts with the Indians had created friendships between the natives and the Saints. Most Indians were not only kind to them, but on one occasion a Potawatomi chief proudly showed the Mormon leader a paper from “Father” Joseph Smith, dated 1843, counseling them not to sell their lands. This was depicted on a map showing the boundaries of the property drawn by W. W. Phelps, and containing two sheets of hieroglyphics from the Book of Abraham.

When the Saints crossed the Missouri River into Omaha country, Brigham Young followed the same procedures that he had used with the Potawatomies. Hearing the Omahas had recently returned to the region from their summer hunt, he sent three men to ask their chiefs to meet him for negotiations. The Saints wanted to stay on their land for a short time while they migrated west. In return, the Mormons would help the Omahas repair their guns, teach their children to read, and “if they wanted [us] to pay for occupancy of their lands we will pay them; but they should not touch our property, and we will not their[s].”

On 28 August 1846 Brigham Young and other Mormon dignitaries met some eighty Omahas dressed in native costume near the banks of the Missouri River, where they began their talk by smoking the peace pipe. After this ceremony, Brigham Young stood and addressed the group, saying the Saints were being persecuted. Consequently, they were moving to California but wanted permission to live on Omaha lands while making their exodus. Reaffirming their willingness to aid the Indians and to pay for using their land, the Mormon leader suggested they sign a treaty to this effect. Following Young’s proposal, Big Elk addressed the historic gathering, saying that he had no objections to the agreement, but he was not sure how the government would react, since the Otoes also claimed the land. Concluding his speech, Big Elk said he had

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10Ibid.
11Ibid., 11 July 1846.
12Ibid., 7 August 1846.
heard favorable reports about the Mormons and hoped the Saints would live up to this reputation.\textsuperscript{13}

Feeling uneasy about dual claims on the land, Young visited the Otoes, who lived along the north bank of the Platte River, and discussed the matter with them. The Otoes said they did not want any difficulties with the Omahas, but evading a direct answer, said they would give their reply after their chief returned.\textsuperscript{14} Apparently feeling satisfied that he would have no serious troubles with the Otoes, Brigham Young held another talk with the Omahas. Finally, after assurances that the Saints would use little wood for their stoves, houses, fences, and other purposes, Big Elk, Standing Elk, and Little Chief all placed their marks on an agreement stating that the Mormons could have the privilege of tarrying upon the land for two years or more, or as long as may suit their convenience ... provided that our great father, the President of the United States shall not counsel us to the contrary.\textsuperscript{15}

Realizing the Saints also needed government approval, Young petitioned President Polk for permission to make a temporary settlement at Winter Quarters. Unlike the request to settle on the Potawatomi lands, permission was never granted to settle among the Omahas. Instead, an involved controversy developed among government officials, Indian agents, private citizens, and the Mormons.\textsuperscript{16} Finally, the Mormons abandoned Winter Quarters during the summer of 1848.

Meanwhile, friction had developed between the Saints and the Indians at Winter Quarters when the Mormons ranged their livestock along the river bottoms and the Omahas began taking two or three head of cattle per day. Disturbed by this situation, some of the Saints suggested the thieves be shot; others insisted they not trade with the Indians. Repulsed by these suggestions, Brigham Young objected to shooting them, instead advising the Saints to "form a square so that we could keep them out of our midst" and if they entered the fields and started "killing our cattle or stealing our blankets or anything else ... [we should] whip them."\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 28 August 1846.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 3 September 1846. For a study that shows similar political problems, see John C. Ewers, "Intertribal Warfare as the Precursor of Indian-White Warfare on the Northern Great Plains," Western Historical Quarterly 6 (October 1975): 397-410.
\textsuperscript{15}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 3 September 1846.
\textsuperscript{16}See the correspondence exchanged between the Mormons and government officials during the Mormon sojourn on Indian lands in "Letters Received By the Office of Indian Affairs: St. Louis Superintendency, 1824-51," microfilm copy, Harold B. Lee Library.
Thinking Big Elk, like other “rulers” had power to police the members of his band, Brigham Young confronted him on the subject of stealing. Hearing that the Indians had taken some fifty head of livestock, Big Elk quipped that he thought the Saints were soldiers enough to defend themselves and property, and, furthermore, that “the destruction of his game, timber, and land were of more value than the cattle [they had] taken.” He also said,

His young men could not help stealing when our cattle were all about ... camp; his young men did not like white people, and they did not like him, he told them we would do them good, and they called him a liar.... His young men felt bad when we crossed the river ... [and] cut the timber, we left them like the trunk of a tree—without leaves or limbs.18

It was during this confrontation with the Omahas that Brigham Young began practicing his famous Indian policy which he later summarized in the phrase that “it was cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them.” Seeking to avoid open conflict, Young promised Big Elk some tobacco, powder, and lead if the Mormons could herd their cattle “on the bottoms without molestation.” Responding to this gesture, Big Elk said

... he knew the white people were quick tempered, his people were slow; he should counsel them till he went to his grave; he came to settle the difficulty ... but he would not ask for powder and lead, if he had means to buy it.19

In a few days, as promised, Brigham Young sent Big Elk a barrel of powder and one hundred pounds of lead, wished him a prosperous buffalo hunt, volunteered to get his guns repaired, and asked if he in turn would counsel his men “not to kill any more cattle.”20 Big Elk accepted the gifts and in a few days visited the Mormon leader, giving Young two horses and saying he could not control his bad young men, “although they had been chastized for their conduct.”21

Young’s Indian diplomacy did help maintain a degree of friendship with some of the members of the Omaha tribe, however. But an important factor that especially helped minimize the conflicts between the Mormons and the Omahas was the delicate and complicated intertribal conflicts between the Omaha Indians and the Sioux, Iowas, Otoes, and Pawnees. Fortunately, the large

18Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 24 October 1846.
19Ibid.
20Ibid., 6 November 1846.
21Ibid., 15 November 1846.
number of Mormons living in the area gave the Omahas some protection from their ancient foes. Despite this aid, some of the Omahas continued to take the Saints' livestock and property, causing the pioneers to further distrust the Indians.

**IN THE SALT LAKE VALLEY**

Brigham Young followed many of the same practices he used with the Omaha Indians after the Mormons settled in the Salt Lake Valley. While crossing the plains, he organized the Saints into large companies and armed them with a variety of weapons, urging them to be vigilant in guarding their livestock and camps from possible Indian attacks. He also held several conferences with the natives while crossing the plains. Reaching the Great Basin, he deliberately selected the Salt Lake Valley for settlement, partly because two of the more fertile areas, the Bear and Utah Lake valleys, were prime hunting and fishing grounds for the Shoshone and the Utes. This decision proved to be a wise one, for the Saints had minimal conflict with the natives during the first eighteen months of their settlement.

Initial contact with the natives began when several Utah Indians offered the Saints "two ponies and a buckskin for a rifle and twenty charges of powder and balls." In a few days, thirty Shoshone Indians also visited the Mormons and wanted to trade for guns and ammunition. But soon, an ancient feud surfaced between the Shoshone and Utah Indians. While bartering with the Saints, a Utah brave took a horse from the Shoshone camp. The Shoshone braves pursued the Utahs toward the mountains, a battle ensued, and two Ute Indians were killed. When the Shoshone braves returned, they were angry with the Mormons "because [they had] traded with the Utahs." Claiming the Utah Indians had crossed over the boundary line, and apparently believing the

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22Brooks, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:216-17. See also Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 13 December 1846 and January and February 1847.

23For the organizational pattern see Doctrine and Covenants, Section 136. See also Manuscript History of Brigham Young for the period during the exodus, as well as *William Clayton's Journal: A Daily Record of the Journey of the Original Company of "Mormon" Pioneers from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1921), pp. 86-87.

24Brigham Young knew a great deal about the Indians in the Great Basin before the Mormon exodus. He had studied John C. Fremont's *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to the Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44* (Washington, [D.C.]: Gales and Seaton, Printers, 1845). This report gave vivid descriptions of the Indians in the Salt Lake and Utah Valleys. Young talked with several missionaries and mountain men. Jim Bridger told him not to settle in the Utah Valley because of the hostility of the Indians. For Young's conversations with the mountain men and others he met crossing the plains, see Manuscript History of Brigham Young and *William Clayton's Journal*, esp. pp. 275-78.

25*Journal of Thomas Bullock*, 27 July 1847, Church Historical Department.

Saints would serve as a good buffer between them and the Utahs, these Indians offered the land to the Mormons for powder and lead. Brigham Young advised his people to keep away from the Indians and not trade guns, powder, balls, and lead with them, "for they will shoot down our cattle." He continued by charging that the Indians had stolen

guns yesterday and had them under their blankets and if you don’t attend to this you are heating a kettle of boiling water to scald your own feet. If you listen to counsel you will let them alone and let them eat the crickets, there’s plenty of them.

Remembering the intertribal conflicts between the Omaha and Otoe Indians over the ownership of land at Winter Quarters, Brigham said,

I understand the Shosonies offered to sell the land and we were to buy it of them, the Utahs would want pay for the land too. The land belongs to our Father in Heaven and we calculate to plow and plant it and no man will have power to sell his inheritance for he cannot remove it; it belongs to the Lord.27

Within a few weeks, while Brigham Young had returned to Winter Quarters, the Salt Lake Stake High Council implemented his policies. Believing uncontrolled trade with the Indians would result in private disputes with the natives, the High Council authorized only certain men to exchange goods with the Indians.28 Some of the Saints disobeyed the policy. One person who violated the rule was brought before the High Council and accused of sowing dissatisfaction among the Indians. He was reprimanded and required to “take the pony back to the Indians ... and get his things within two days.”29 The High Council also tried to protect the colony from Indian depredations by herding livestock, guarding the settlement, and supervising the construction of homes, arranging them so they would give the Saints protection from Indians and the elements.30

During these early months of settlement, the Saints were surprised to discover the extensive Indian slave trade. The most powerful Utah Indian bands acquired Indian women and children from weaker bands by stealing, trading, and waging war. These hostages were exchanged for horses, saddles, bridles, guns, ammunition, and anything else that was scarce in the Utah Indian economy. Some Indian bands traveled to California, New Mexico, and Mexico to exchange their goods, while others waited for traders from the

28See the Salt Lake Stake High Council Minutes, Church Historical Department.
29Ibid., 4, 11, 24 October 1847.
30Ibid.

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Southwest to come to Utah to make the trade. With the arrival of the Saints, many Indians saw a market close to home.

At first, the Mormons were reluctant to exchange goods for Indian women and children, but the Saints soon learned the necessity of engaging in this trade. In the fall of 1847, Batiste, Walkara's son, brought a sixteen year old boy and an eighteen year old girl to the Mormon fort and offered them for sale. Claiming he had taken the hostages from a band in Beaver Valley, Batiste told the settlers that if they did not buy them, he would kill them. Not believing him, the Saints refused the purchase. To their surprise and horror, Batiste took the prisoners to his camp, killed the boy, and returned to the fort to offer the girl for sale. Deeply moved by the situation and fearing Indian hostilities for refusing to trade, Charles Decker, Brigham Young's son-in-law, traded a gun to Batiste for the girl. Soon the girl became a regular member of Brigham Young's family, was given the name of Sally, and was reared as one of Brigham Young's children. Other Mormons also purchased Indian children during this early period.

Meanwhile, the Indians occasionally took a few head of livestock despite the Saints' efforts to protect their property. Responding to this situation, the High Council built a pen for stray animals and urged the pioneers to be more vigilant in caring for their stock. Early in March 1848, they sent a detachment of forty-four men with the marshal, who was given discretionary powers to bring about a settlement with the Indians who had taken their stock. When this military force confronted a band of Indians on the east side of Utah Lake, a band who had taken seventeen head of cattle and one horse, the chief (probably Little Chief) made a settlement by giving a gun for compensation. He had the guilty men whipped and they all promised "to do better."

Unfortunately, this peace with these Indians did not last, despite friendly relations with other bands, including Walkara, who came to the Salt Lake Valley in August and traded horses and mules to the Saints. In the fall and spring of 1848-1849, a few angry natives rejected Little Chief's advice that members of his

32Testimony on Indian Slavery by Brigham Young, 11 January 1852, Brigham Young Indian Supennendency Papers, Church Historical Department.
band should not steal Mormon livestock. They made a "hunting expedition" into the Salt Lake Valley to take some of the Saints' livestock and returned to Provo Canyon. At the same time, other reports (later proved false) circulated that many horses had also been taken from Brigham Young's herd. Meanwhile, Oliver Huntington reported to Brigham Young that Little Chief was angry with Blue Shirt and Roman Nose and their followers because they had rejected his counsel and stolen Mormon cattle. Reportedly, he said,

if the big captain does not kill them I will, but it will look better for you to kill your own enemies. If they are not killed now, they will soon get more men to stealing cattle and then you will come up and kill me, my men, women, and children.\(^ {13} \)

After a lengthy consultation, Young decided that a display of military power "would put a final end to their depredations in the future."\(^ {36} \) So in early March, John C. Scott led some thirty-five men to search for "hostiles." After looking unsuccessfully, the expedition met Little Chief who volunteered his sons to guide Scott to Blue Shirt's camp. Traveling at night to avoid detection, they crept up Battle Creek Canyon and surrounded three lodges of sleeping Indians. The Indian guides and D. B. Huntington requested that the Indians surrender and pay for the stock they had taken. But after repeated requests, the Indians not only refused to discuss the matter but demanded that the whites leave. They finally "gave a war hoop and fired three guns."\(^ {37} \) Captain Scott ordered his men to return fire, and within two hours all the Indian warriors were killed except a sixteen year old boy. After rounding up the Indian women and children, Little Chief urged the Saints to kill the boy to prevent him from taking revenge, but they rejected his advice. Instead, they took him and many of the other refugees to the Salt Lake Valley, where the Saints fed them until they were resettled among their relatives.\(^ {38} \)

There is no doubt that this unfortunate episode generated hostile feelings toward the Mormons and Little Chief's group among certain bands in Utah Valley. New troubles started when the sixteen year old Indian refugee joined Wanship's and Goship's bands.

\(^{13}\) Diary of Oliver Boardman Huntington, 1842-1900, Volume 1, page 53, Utah State Historical Society. Much of the politics between the Mormons and the Indians as well as the intratribal feuds can be seen in the way that Calvin Martin conceptualizes white-Indian relations in his article, "Ethnohistory: A Better Way to Write Indian History," Western Historical Quarterly 9 (January 1978):41-56.

\(^{36}\) Diary of Oliver Boardman Huntington, 1:55. Quotation comes from Brooks, Diary of Hosea Stout, 2:344.

\(^{37}\) Brooks, Diary of Hosea Stout, 2:346. Stout gives a very detailed description of this campaign from pages 344-347.

\(^{38}\) Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 27 February 1849.
and persuaded them to seek revenge by attacking Little Chief's band, killing one of his sons and stealing some of his livestock and horses. Expecting assistance, Little Chief told the Mormons that if they were his friends they should prove it by helping him get his horses back.\textsuperscript{39} In a few days the request was honored.\textsuperscript{40}

Furthermore, when the Saints entered the Utah Valley to make their first settlement along the Provo River in March 1849, a band of Utahs led by Angatawata stopped them along the trail before they reached the river and refused to let them pass until they promised not to drive them from their lodges or interfere with their traditional way of life.\textsuperscript{41} Apparently agreements were reached that permitted the Saints to settle along the Provo.

During this period, Brigham Young also heard reports from Jim Bridger that Indians were on the warpath. Old Elk, a chief in the Utah Valley who frequently troubled the Saints, was urging all Indian bands to join him in an attack on the Mormon settlements.\textsuperscript{42} Louis Vasquez, Bridger's partner, reported that Barney Ward and two other Mormons had been trading with Bannocks and subsequently two of these Indians were murdered. Vasquez reported that the Indians blamed the Mormons and "talked of coming to the valley to war upon the Saints." Brigham Young discounted these reports as rumors and charged that Bridger and other mountaineers were "the real cause of the Indians being incensed."\textsuperscript{43}

Seeking to avoid an Indian uprising, Brigham Young took several defensive steps. First, he reorganized the Nauvoo Legion, which had been disbanded just before the Nauvoo exodus, by calling every able-bodied man between the ages of fourteen and seventy-five into service.\textsuperscript{44} Second, he advised local authorities at Provo to finish their fort quickly and stay near the settlement. He also told them to place a cannon on top of the fort, to gather large numbers of small stones to use for grapeshot, and to keep a vigilant guard both day and night. Additionally, they were not to give presents to the Indians. However, if the Indians eventually proved to be friendly, the Saints were counseled to teach them to raise grain.\textsuperscript{45} Third, Young restricted authorization to trade with the

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 12 April 1849. Hosea Stout reports that the sixteen-year-old boy joined Wanship's band and was killed in this battle.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., 7 May 1849.


\textsuperscript{42}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 17 April 1849, Church Historical Department.

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 12 May 1849.

\textsuperscript{44}Brooks, \textit{Diary of Hosea Stout}, 2:351. He said John Taylor and Brigham Young spoke on Sunday, 22 April, and said the "next Saturday [was] to be set apart in the afternoon to organize the Nauvoo Legion as the Indians were acting suspiciously."

\textsuperscript{45}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 18 April 1849.
Indians in the Utah Valley to Alexander Williams and D. B. Huntington.\textsuperscript{46} Fourth, he tried to counteract the undesirable influence he thought the mountain men had among the Indians by sending his own men to establish friendly relations with the Shoshone and Utah Indians. For this purpose, Thomas L. Smith was sent to visit the Indians near Bear Lake to establish friendship with these natives and if possible to negotiate the return of some women and children who belonged to Chief Walkara’s band.\textsuperscript{47} At the same time, D. B. Huntington was sent to make friends with Walkara.\textsuperscript{48}

A Mormon Peace Corps

Evidently, Young’s strategy paid some dividends, for in June of 1849, Walkara and his men met with Mormon leaders. After all parties had smoked the peace pipe, Walkara declared his friendship with the Snakes, Timpany Utes, and the Mormons and asked the Saints to settle on his land. Brigham Young promised that if the chief would send him some guides in “six moons we will send a company to your place.” Trying to assure Walkara that the Mormons were seeking peaceful relations, he continued, “We have an understanding with Goship and Wanship [Indians of the Salt Lake Valley] about this place. We want to be friends with you.”\textsuperscript{49} Seeking to make a Mormon settlement on Walkara’s land attractive to the chief, Young revealed his plan for helping the Indians adjust to Mormon colonization. He promised to build Walkara a house and to teach his people to build homes, to raise livestock, to make blankets, and to read the Book of Mormon so they might know about their forefathers.\textsuperscript{49} He also promised to trade them ammunition to hunt with. Likewise seeking to impress Brigham Young with his friendliness, Walkara gestured as he said:

Beyond the mountain, plenty of streams. From Salt Springs, over a mountain, lots of timber. The next sleep, good land, plenty of timber and grass. All my land clear. The Timpany Utes killed my father four years ago. I hate to have you stay on this land. If you come unto my land, my people shall not steal your cattle, nor whip them. I want the Mormon children to be with me. I hate you to be on such poor land. When Patsoeuett heard that the Mormons had killed his brother, he had told the Indians to stop killing. He is not mad, but glad. It is not good to fight. It makes women and children cry. But let women and children play together. I told the Piedes, a great while ago to stop fighting and stealing, but they have no ears.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., 19 and 27 May 1849.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., 26 May 1849. See Young’s letter of instructions, Young to Thomas Smith, 14 May 1849. Brigham Young Papers, Box 12, Folder 13, Church Historical Department.
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., 14 June 1849.
\textsuperscript{49}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50}Ibid.

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In reply, Young said he wanted the Saints to settle among them, and he tried to assure Walkara that the Mormons would be peaceful. The Mormon leader said, "I don't want to kill another Indian, but they [speaking of the Indians killed at Battle Creek] dared us to do it." The men Brigham Young sent to explore "Walkara's country" soon returned with a favorable report. Late in the fall of 1849, he sent 225 young people to plant a colony in the San Pitch Valley some 134 miles south and east of the original Salt Lake settlement.

Unlike the first settlement in the Salt Lake Valley, Manti, the first colony in the San Pitch Valley, was essentially a mission to cultivate peace with the Indians and to help them change their life-style from a hunting, food-gathering one, to an agriculturally-based one, believing that Mormon colonization would eventually reduce the Indians' supply of game. Once these local Indians were convinced to change their way of life, they were to be enlisted as missionaries, not only to declare to other Indians that the Mormons were their friends but also to tell them their lives would be enriched if they would adopt the Mormons' agricultural way of life. In a real sense, Manti was intended to be a Mormon "peace corps" for Chief Walkara's band and the surrounding Indians.

These extensive plans for the Manti colony are clearly revealed in the correspondence between Isaac Morley, president of the colony, and Brigham Young. Soon after settlement, Morley used an analogy to state the purposes of their mission by saying:

> We feel confident that no mission to the scattered sons of Joseph was ever attended with brighter prospects of doing good than the one in which we are engaged. ... [They are like] a stone, from the quarry [which] needs polishing to become useful, and we believe there are some here that may be made, [with watchful care] to shine as bright gems in the Temple of the Lord, yes, stars that may spread their twinkling light to the distant tribes.

As an example of the fulfillment of his dreams, Morley declared that Walkara asked to be ordained so he could "spread the gospel to others" during his next trading expedition. Again reflecting on the purposes of the colony, Morley said:

> Did we come here to enrich ourselves in the things of this world? No. We were sent to enrich the Natives and comfort the

1Ibid.
2Milton R. Hunter, Brigham Young the Colonizer (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1940), pp. 244-45.
3For Morley's letter to Brigham Young, see those dated 20 February, 15 March, 13, 17, and 21 April 1850, found in Box 20, Folder 14, Brigham Young Papers, Church Historical Department. Some of Young's letters to Morley appear in the Manuscript History of Brigham Young under the dates from November 1850 through 1851. Other letters are scattered throughout his outgoing correspondence for the period.
hearts of the long oppressed. Let us try the experiment and if we fail to accomplish the object, then say, Boys, come away.54

During the first winter, the Mormons tried to make their mission to the Indians succeed. Arriving late in November 1849, the settlers spent much of their energy trying to survive the winter by pitching tents, or building small log cabins, lean-tos, and other types of makeshift living quarters.55 Since the winter was an unusually hard one, both the whites and Indians suffered from heavy snows and cold weather. Added to these troubles was an epidemic of measles, which caused deaths among both peoples.56 Soon there was a shortage of medication, food, clothing, and livestock feed.

Fortunately, the Mormons and the Indians cooperated with each other during these hard times and formed strong bonds of friendship. While the snow was deep, the livestock found it nearly impossible to find sufficient feed. Many cattle died, and these animals were given to the Indians who found it difficult to find enough game. In addition, some Saints shared their meager food supplies with the Indians.57 Some Indians, however, disobeyed Walkara and Arrapeen’s promise that the Indians would not kill the settlers’ livestock. The violators of this pledge, to the Saint’s surprise and amazement, were shot by Walkara or his brother. Such action gave the local Saints confidence in Walkara’s leadership and gave them hope that both sides could police their own and thereby maintain peace.58 During the measles epidemic, the white settlers gave medication to their Indian friends, and fortunately, many of them recovered. Walkara, Arrapeen, and San Pitch all reported they believed that if the Mormons had not shared their medicine with them, many more of their children would have died.59 Just before Christmas a wagon train was sent to Salt Lake for additional supplies, but on its return trip the oxen were unable to pull the wagons through the deep snow. However, the Mormons and the Indians cooperated in salvaging the needed food and clothing on hand-drawn sleds.60

THE INDIANS AND THE PROVO COLONY

Meanwhile, the relationship of the Provo colony and the Indians of Utah Valley was a very different story, even though Young had fully expected the Provo Saints to establish friendly re-

54 Morley to Young, 17 April 1850, Brigham Young Papers, Box 20, Folder 14.
55 Hunter, Brigham Young, pp. 244–50.
56 Morley to Young, 15 March 1850, Brigham Young Papers, Box 20, Folder 14.
57 Morley to Young, 20 February, 15 March, 13, 17, and 21 April 1850.
58 Morley to Young, 17 April 1850.
59 Morley to Young, 15 March 1850.
60 Journal History, 15 March 1850 and 20 February 1850, contains letters from Morley to Young. On 12 April 1850, Young sent a “General Epistle to the Saints,” Church Historical Department.
lations with the Indians as at Manti. From the beginning, the Indians irritated the pioneers by stealing their livestock. As a result, the Provo Saints nearly resorted to shooting Indians, especially after some natives had shot at Nolan, Thomas, and James Ivie; had killed several cattle; and had stolen some corn. But open warfare was avoided when a peace conference was held. From the Saints' point of view, the Indians had failed to keep their promises during the winter because they "still persisted in stealing, and were very saucy, annoying, and provoking, threatening to kill the men and take their women."62

Hearing of these complaints, Brigham Young sought a practical solution by warning the colony at Provo to guard their property, secure their women and children inside the fort, and keep the Indians outside.63 If we are going to have dominion over them so that they might share in the blessings of God, Young declared, you cannot treat them as equals and still expect to "raise them up to you." Much of the current problem he said, was caused by the Saints being

too familiar with them for the brethren have spent too much time smoking and chattering with them instead of teaching them to labor, such a course had encouraged them in idleness and ignorance, the effects of which we now feel.

Not abandoning his plans for having Provo establish friendly relations with the Indians, President Young frankly told them, "you must rid yourselves of these evils ... a steady and upright and preserving course may yet restore or gain the confidence of the Indians and you will be safe."64

Evidently, some Provo Mormons ignored Young's advice. Early in January, 1850, Richard A. Ivie, John R. Stoddard, and Jerome Zabriskie met an Indian named Old Bishop, accused him of wearing a stolen shirt, and proceeded to take it from him. But he drew his bow and Stoddard retaliated by shooting him in the head. Fearing the Indians' revenge, they dragged his body to the Provo River, filled it with rocks, and sank it near Box Elder Island. The Indians soon discovered the murder and demanded the criminals. When the Saints failed to turn the guilty men over to the Indians, the natives took revenge by stealing more livestock, driving their horses through the crops, and threatening to drive the Mormons from the valley. Angered by this retaliation, the settlers were likewise harsh in their treatment of the Indians. During

61 Isaac Higbee to Brigham Young, 15 October 1849, Manuscript History of Brigham Young.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Young to Higbee, 13 October 1849, Manuscript History of Brigham Young.
65 Ibid.
this tense period, Old Elk, who had long been known for his hatred of the Mormons, came to the fort with the measles and asked for medication. Instead of helping him, Alexander Williams “took him by the nap of the neck and kicked him out.”

Subsequently, Alexander Williams reported to Brigham Young that the Utah Indians had intensified their stealing of the livestock and were threatening to wage war on the settlement, but he didn’t tell Young about the immediate cause of the troubles, the death of Old Bishop. Under these circumstances, Young repeated his previous counsel and said, furthermore, “there was no necessity for [killing Indians] if the Brethren acted wisely in their intercourse with them and warned the Brethren that if they killed Indians for stealing they would have to answer for it.” Reemphasizing this point, Young asked,

Why should men have a disposition to kill a destitute, naked Indian, who may steal a shirt, or a horse and thinks it no harm, when they never think of meting out a like retribution to a white man who steals, although he has been taught better from infancy?”

Not satisfied with Young’s reply, Isaac Higbee, leader of the Provo colony, presented his case against the Indians, saying they “had stolen 50 or 60 livestock ... [and] were very saucy and threatened to kill more cattle and get other Indians to join them and help them kill the settlers in the valley.” Higbee also claimed the Indians wanted to fight and called the settlers cowards “because they would not fight.” Finally, he declared, “all the Brethren in [the] Utah Fort were agreed in asking the privilege of making war upon the Indians and defending themselves.” Despite this last claim, all the settlers did not agree that fighting the Indians was necessary, a fact which was unknown to Brigham Young.

Thinking survival of the Provo settlement was at stake, Young consulted Captain Howard Stansbury, who had been conducting a geological survey in Utah Valley during the summer for the federal government. While there, Stansbury had had trouble with the same Indians and declared that in his opinion it was absolutely necessary for self-preservation to fight them. Since it would be impossible to call federal troops from Fort Hall, Stansbury offered Young arms, ammunition, and men “to serve without com-

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65Statement made by James Bean, 21 June 1854, inserted in Manuscript History of Brigham Young, January 1850.
66Ibid., 1 January 1850.
67Accounts of Higbee’s plea can be found in the Manuscript History of Brigham Young for 31 January 1850 and in the Brigham Young Collection, Microfilm Reel 80, which is a copy of Brigham Young Papers, from Box 47, Folder 6, Church Historical Department.
pensation since they are being paid by the government” anyway.69

After receiving this advice and offer of aid, Brigham Young, whose very nature was opposed to the shedding of blood, directed Daniel Wells to order the Nauvoo Legion to subdue the “hostile Indians” in the Utah Valley. Legion leaders were ordered to stop the depredations and, if necessary, to exterminate those who “do not separate themselves from their hostile clans and sue for peace.” Furthermore, Legion leaders were cautioned to “exercise every principle of humanity comparable with the laws of war and see that no violence is permitted to women and children unless the same shall demand it.”70

After traveling to Fort Utah, the expedition discovered that the Indians had fortified themselves by using one of the abandoned log cabins and by dispersing themselves among the timber, behind an embankment, and in the snow and underbrush near the river.71 On 8 February, the Legion surrounded these natives but were unable to defeat them, though several Indians were either killed or wounded. After the first day’s battle, the Legion leaders were unable to determine whether Indians from Spanish Fork and those to the south of the lake had joined the “hostiles,” because additional livestock was taken during the night.72 To avoid further losses, fifteen men were dispatched to protect the livestock, the

69Howard Stansbury, An Expedition to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah: Including a Description of its Geography, Natural History, and Minerals, and an Analysis of its Waters: With an Authentic Account of the Mormon Settlement (London and Philadelphia: Sampson and Lippincott Co., 1852), pp. 148-50. Drawings of Old Elk appear between pages 150-151. Stansbury reported that “After the [his] party left Lake Utah for winter quarters in Salt Lake City, the Indians became more insolent, boasting of what they had done—driving off the stock of the inhabitants in the southern settlements, resisting all attempts to recover them, and finally firing upon the people themselves, as they issued from their little stockade to attend to their ordinary occupations. Under these circumstances, the settlers in the Utah Valley applied to the supreme government, at Salt Lake City, for counsel as to the proper course of action. The president [Brigham Young] was at first extremely adverse to the adoption of harsh measures; but, after several conciliatory overtures had been resorted to in vain, he very properly determined to put a stop, by force, to further aggressions, which, if not resisted, could only end in the total destruction of the colony. Before coming to this decision, the authorities called upon me to consult as to the policy of the measures, and to request the expression of my opinion as to what the Government of the United States might be expected to take of it.” “Stansbury to Young, 4 February 1850. Brigham Young Papers, Microfilm Reel 44, Box 20, Folder 16. 

70“Special Order No. 1, issued by Daniel H. Wells to John C. Scott, 31 January 1850, Utah Territorial Military Nauvoo Legion Correspondence, 1849 to 1863, microfilmed by the Utah State Archives (cited hereafter as Legion Correspondence). For Brigham Young’s feelings about bloodshed and violence, see Ronald W. Walker and Ronald K. Eplin, “Brigham Himself: An Autobiographical Recollection,” Journal of Mormon History 4 (1977):19-34. Relying on the Journal of Discourses (JD), these authors say, ‘Young described himself as praying fervently that he would ‘never be brought into circumstances to be obliged to shed human blood.’ (JD, 11:128) ‘I wish to save my life,’ he insisted, ‘and have no desire to destroy life. If I had my wish, I should entirely stop the shedding of human blood. The people abroad do not generally understand this.’” (JD, 10:108). 

71Sources for the details of the campaign are from the Legion Correspondence, the Manuscript History of Brigham Young, and the Diary of Hosea Stout.

72George W. Howland, an officer from Stansbury’s expedition, wrote to Wells about the details of the first few days of the campaign. See Howland to Wells, 8 February 1850, Legion Correspondence.
cannon was mounted on wheels. Orders were issued not to take any hostile Indians prisoner, but only those friendly Indians who would sue for peace, and place them under guard at the fort.73 On the ninth, the expedition again failed to defeat the Indians, even though they captured the log house. During the night, the Indians fled. Frustrated by their failure to keep the hostiles surrounded until they surrendered, companies were organized and ordered to trail the Indians, "and if they shall come in and sue for peace grant it to them. If not pursue and slay them wherever they can be found. Let it be with them 'Extermination or Peace.'"74

Guided by these instructions, one company of men followed a party of Indians to Rock Canyon where they shot several natives and discovered that several Indians like Old Elk had died from exposure and wounds while others had escaped on snowshoes over the mountain. Another company of the Legion went south of Utah Lake where they killed some Indians and took other prisoners. Still another company followed other Indians onto the frozen lake and shot some of them. Reconnaissance parties searched elsewhere in the Utah Valley, but failed to find any more Indians.75

While this fighting continued, Wells directed Ebenezer Hinkley, Barney Ward, and Isaac Brown to inform the Manti colony and an exploring party camped along the Sevier River that the Saints were at war with the Utah Indians. Consequently, they should protect themselves from possible hostilities and search for other routes to the Salt Lake Valley.

While at Manti, these three men also discussed with Walkara the war the Saints were having with the Indians of the Utah Valley. When told the details of the fighting, he expressed "considerable excitement [because] a number of his friends [had been] killed by the mormons."76 Despite this loss of his friends, Walkara did not seek revenge but remained loyal to the Mormons. He reportedly said, "let them fight it out all is wright ... the Utah[s] are bad they wont take counsil, they have killed my son Battee I feel bad, I want they should make me some presents of guns, Blankets ..." Reaffirming his loyalty, he said, "I want to have the Mormons stay here and plant ... and do us good, and we will be

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1 Wells to John Brown, 9 February 1850, Legion Correspondence.
2 Wells to G. D. Grant, 9 February 1850, Legion Correspondence.
3 For details of this phase of the battle, see Howland to Wells, 9 February 1850; General Orders No. 2, 16 February 1850; Special Orders No. 1, 11 February 1850; Special Orders No. 3, 18 February 1850, Legion Correspondence.
4 Special Orders No. 2, dated 16 February 1850, sent these men to Manti and to the exploring party camped along the Sevier River. Morley's letter to Wells, dated 20 February, told about Walkara's reactions to the Mormons' fighting with the Indians in the Utah Valley (Legion Correspondence).
friends. . . .” Following this declaration, Walkara sent “two men to Arapene's tent . . . to tell him to stay home and not go to fight and . . . [to tell] all natives in the region round about to stay at home and not go to fight.” Brigham Young was obviously pleased that the Manti settlement had succeeded in keeping Walkara loyal to the Mormons.

In a few days, Walkara proved his devotion to the Mormons by asking President Morley to lead him “down into the waters of baptism” and by urging his clan “to find where, they [could] wash away [their] sins.” After the baptismal ceremony, Walkara requested Young to give him “a good lot of bread-stuff, . . . some whiskey, as . . . it makes him feel good, . . . [and] a good quantity of Rice, without fail” in exchange for a good pony. In a few weeks the crafty Ute chief, claiming that Brigham Young had promised him a white wife, requested a wife from among the Mormon women at Manti. Young granted his demands for food, but refused to honor his petition for a Mormon wife. And as for the whiskey, the Mormon leader said it was not good, . . . and good Mormons do not drink it only as a medicine and the council of our great chief to bro. Walker is not to drink whiskey and pursuade his people not to drink it and he will have more of the great spirit in his heart.

Meanwhile, at Provo, the Nauvoo Legion did not execute “to the letter” General Wells' order either to force a peace settlement or to exterminate the rebellious Indians. Probably not more than forty Indians of the several hundred in the Timpanoges band who lived in family clans in Utah Valley died from wounds and exposure or were killed outright in battle. Some escaped across the ice to disperse among the Gosiutes near Tooele, later to trouble the Saints in that region. Others snow-shoed over the mountains at the head of Rock Canyon, and apparently reported their unhappy experiences to the Weber Utes led by Little Soldier. The present of these Indians from Utah Valley subsequently contributed to the Indian troubles of the Mormons near Ogden. Still other warriors and women and children were captured and taken

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7 Morley to Wells, 20 February 1850, Legion Correspondence.
8 Morley to Young, 20 February 1850, Brigham Young Papers, Reel 44, Box 20, Folder 13.
9 Morley to Young, 15 March 1850, Brigham Young Papers, Reel 44, Box 20, Folder 13.
10 Morley to Young, 13 April 1850.
11 The First Presidency to Isaac Morley, 24 March 1850, Brigham Young Papers.
12 Peter Gottfriedson, Indian Depredations in Utah, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Private Printing, 1969), p. 35. Gottfriedson estimates that some eighty warriors were involved in the battle. Howard Stansbury also estimated that forty warriors were killed and about forty prisoners were taken into custody.

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along with their livestock to Salt Lake City, where they were cared for by Mormon pioneers for a short time.\textsuperscript{83}

Believing it was virtually impossible to track down those hostiles who had escaped, Mormon military leaders, after consultation with Brigham Young, abandoned their plans to exterminate all hostiles. Furthermore, they ordered that the Indian prisoners be released, returned to their people, and instructed to say that the Mormons would “dwell in peace [with them] if they cease their depredations and refrain from stirring up the neighboring Indians to enmity with their statements.” To insure the continuance of peace, the Mormons proclaimed that “the friendly Indian \textit{Black Hawk} must be their chief and they must obey him.”\textsuperscript{84} As an inducement to end all fighting, the Mormon leaders promised to return their ponies “and again become their friends. We do not wish to continue the war with them, but merely teach them to do right.” In case the hostile Indians who had escaped returned to their homeland, Wells instructed Bishop Higbee and Captain Conover not only to make peace with them but also to “ascertain their true feelings toward us, and be prepared to detect any hypocrisy, . . . [and] do not trust them too far.”\textsuperscript{85}

In his evaluation of the war, Brigham Young was frankly disappointed in the failure of the Saints in Provo to maintain peace with the Indians, especially in contrast to the success of the settlers at Manti. He said he “felt much chagrined at the conduct of the settlers” at Fort Utah. Therefore, he directed Wells to commission the local leaders to negotiate the final peace arrangements because it was unfair for the Church hierarchy to ask the Indians to promise to behave better than the Saints did.\textsuperscript{86}

Brigham Young tried to help heal the breach between the Mormon settlers and those Indians who had survived the war by

\textsuperscript{83}Brooks, \textit{Diary of Hosea Stout}, 2:362. Stout says that Wells returned from the “campaign to the Utah bringing some 26 women & children prisoners & 13 horses The women & children were distributed among the people who were willing to take & educate and civilize them and the Horses are going to be given to some of the friendly Indians.” The escape of the Indians is described in the Nauvoo Legion Correspondence. See Wells letter, dated 14 February 1850; Wells to Young, 18 February 1850; Conover and McBride to Wells, 23 February 1850. See also the account in the “Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs for the Utah Superintendent, 1849–1858,” microfilm copy, Brigham Young University. The Office of Indian Affairs investigated the charge that the Mormons were holding Indian women and children in slavery when they had been taken during the war to “exterminate” the Utah Indians. For the details, see Edward Cooper to A. S. Langhery, 10 September 1850; George E. Montgomery to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 26 July 1850; and Edward Cooper to Luke Lea, 10 July 1851. Cooper concluded after talking with seven or eight witnesses that the 50 to 100 war refugees were not held in slavery. Instead, the Mormons had taken them into their homes and were caring for them. The Indians were free to return to their people when they decided it would be the better choice.

\textsuperscript{84}This technique was a common practice. Indian agents frequently gave presents to certain Indians to make them powerful enough to become chiefs. In this way, they were able to intervene in local Indian politics.

\textsuperscript{85}Wells to McBride, 23 February 1850, Legion Correspondence.

\textsuperscript{86}Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1 May 1850.
ordering that the final arrangements include the return of all property and prisoners by the Provo Saints. In March of 1850, all prisoners and some horses were returned to Chief Black Hawk with the instructions that the property and the refugees were to be returned to the owners and next of kin. Young also promised Black Hawk that if he would come to a conference, the remainder of the horses would be returned. Wells said, "We want to show the Indians that we are their friends and not their enemies. We do not want their horses, women, or children."87 Remembering that giving food, clothing, etc. had promoted successful relations with the Indians at Winter Quarters and at Manti, Young declared that despite the limited provisions at Provo, the Saints "would have to feed them more or less until they can raise grain or provide for themselves and that we should set an example of civilized men."88

War with the Indians of the Utah Valley neither taught the natives the lessons the Saints intended nor reduced the cultural barriers between them. In the last of May 1850, two Utes killed a pioneer in the mountains between Utah Valley and Sanpete. They were tried, convicted, and executed by the Mormons. Early in the fall of that same year, the Saints became infuriated when some Shoshone began taking crops and livestock. They scolded the natives, who retaliated by deliberately running their ponies through the unharvested fields.90 The cultural conflict was evident, because the Indians, who gathered food from the fields, felt crops were public property until harvested. For centuries they had been gathering food and did not consider it theft. On the other hand, the Saints considered the fields and crops private property as soon as they cleared and planted them.

Tensions continued to rise in Ogden when an Indian was shot in a corn patch, and the natives demanded that the guilty person be given to them. Believing the incident had been an accident, the Saints refused. To satisfy their code of ethics, the Indians took revenge by raiding the village and killing a white man.91 General Wells sent companies from the Nauvoo Legion to settle the affair. However, seeing this situation as different from the troubles in the Utah Valley, Brigham Young cautioned Legion members to "be careful not to get into further difficulty with them if it is

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87 Wells to Conover, 21 March 1850, Legion Correspondence.
88 Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1 May 1850.
90 Lorin Farr to Brigham Young, 16 September 1850, Brigham Young Papers, Reel 44, Box 20, folder 13. See also C. C. Canfield to Daniel H. Wells, 16 September 1850, and Lorin Farr to John Fullmer, 17 September 1850, Legion Correspondence.
91 Farr to Fullmer, 17 September 1850.
possible to avoid it [, but] let them understand, that they must quit their stealing if they want to live in peace.”

Leaders of the Nauvoo Legion took this advice seriously. In a few days the Legion surrounded a band of Indians near Ogden, took some hostages, and then discussed their grievances with the Indians. Soon they reached an agreement which included the provision that the band of Utah Indians who had migrated to the Weber Valley after the recent war in the Utah Valley would return to their homeland.

Peace was restored, but it was not permanent. During the summer of 1851 some Shoshone near Ogden again began taking livestock and crops. The local Saints responded quickly by surrounding a band charged with the theft. During the powwow an Indian drew a knife and was shot. The word soon spread and other natives intensified their molestations to avenge his death. As a result, the settlers requested Governor Young send the Nauvoo Legion to again stop the Indian depredations. Young sent a reprimand, saying the Snake Indians had always been friendly to the Saints:

There may be some among them who will not listen but will steal, now what if they should? Does it become us to make a wanton attack upon the nation and take their property in retaliation, ... instead of exercising and giving heed to the wisdom which superior intelligence should dictate.

Now that we have this problem, Young asked, “how shall we heal the breach?” Answering his own question, he said of the Indian horses taken during the recent confrontation, “restore their property, and make ample satisfaction for killing one of their tribe, give them presents, and explain how it happened, tell them you did not intend killing him and would not, only to save your own lives.” Finally, Young frankly stated, “Do not the people all know that it is cheaper by far, yes hundreds and thousands of dollars cheaper to pay such losses, than raise an expedition ... to fight Indians.”

Meanwhile, the Mormon relations with the Indians near Tooele became even more strained than those near Ogden. As

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early as 1849, the Indians near Tooele had begun taking livestock. This practice continued intermittently for the next two years despite the efforts of the local residents to make a settlement with the Indians.\(^98\) Finally, in 1851, believing all peaceful overtures had failed, Young directed General Wells to send twenty men to Tooele where they were to chasten the guilty Indians, recover the stolen property, and make them "understand that they must leave off their depredations."\(^99\) Thirty Indians were subsequently captured, but most of them escaped before any peace agreement was reached, and livestock losses continued.\(^100\) Exasperated by the situation, Wells sent a large company of men to track down the Indians and "if possible to let no hostile escape."\(^101\) But he warned them to act on the defensive and not give the Indians the opportunity to commit depredations. He cautioned them, saying:

If we pursue the same course that people generally do against the Indians we may expect to expend more time and money in running after Indians than all the loss sustained by them.... The frontier settlements will have to learn to obey counsel and guard with vigilance and build forts... and try to deal wisely with the Indians who have been raised to stealing and moreover are poor ignorant and degraded.\(^102\)

**REMOVAL REQUESTED**

Plagued by many Indian difficulties near Mormon settlements, Brigham Young, like many other frontiersmen, believed one good solution to these "Indian troubles" was to remove the natives away from most of the white settlers. In making this proposal to Congress, he asked, "Do we wish the Indian any evil?" Then he answered, "no we would do them good, for they are human beings, though most awfully degraded." Thinking of his own experiences in trying to alter the Indians' way of life, Young declared, "We would have taught them to plow & sow, and reap and thresh, but they prefer idleness and theft." For the good of the Indians, for the prosperity of civilization, and for the safety of the mail routes, he argued that Congress should remove the In-

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\(^{98}\) See the entries in the Manuscript History of Brigham Young for those reported Mormon troubles with the Indians during this two year span of time.

\(^{99}\) Ibid. Reports in the Manuscript History for the first six months of 1851 show an increase of Indian troubles at Tooele. This quotation comes from Wells' orders to G. D. Grant, dated 12 February 1851, Legion Correspondence.

\(^{100}\) Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 14 June 1851.

\(^{101}\) Wells to Grant, 13 June 1851, Legion Correspondence.

\(^{102}\) Wells and Ferguson to Grant, 14 June 1851, Legion Correspondence.
dians from the interior of the Great Basin to a region near the Wind River Mountains, or "on the snake river, where [there] are fish and game or on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, between the Northern and Southern route to California, where no white man lives, and forests and streams are plenty."\(^{103}\)

After removal, he argued that Congress should not simply leave them to fend for themselves, but should send them teachers, farmers, and missionaries to teach them agriculture, science, and religion. Finally, Young concluded that the Indians "would improve faster, being thus removed from their hunting grounds, knowing as many of them now do, the value of bread, than they would be instructed in this region, where they have been accustomed to hunt, and long remembered exploits would be brought to mind by daily observation."\(^{104}\) This plea to remove the Indians from the territory was not the last one Brigham Young made, for he and other Mormons continued their request that the government extinguish the Indians' rights to the soil and remove them to some other territory.\(^{105}\) The request was finally granted in 1868 as the government created a reservation for many Utah Indians.\(^{106}\)

Between 1835 and 1851, Brigham Young certainly experienced a great variety of association with many different native American tribes while he had lived in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois; had led the epic Mormon exodus; and finally had colonized the Great Basin. During this formative period, Brigham Young, the Mormon Prophet, colonist, and governor, preached sermons to the Indians; performed sacred religious rites for them; smoked their peace pipes; negotiated agreements with them for settling on their land; bartered guns, ammunition, and food in exchange for their children, furs, hides, and horses; gave them tobacco, food, and clothing to alleviate their suffering; and established colonies to aid them in making a transformation of their hunting, fishing, and food-gathering habits to a more reliable agricultural economy patterned after the Mormon life-style. But he also found it necessary to engage in open conflict with those Indians in the Basin when it seemed that peaceful means had failed to settle Mormon differences with them.

These experiences, along with his belief in Mormon scripture and his observations of how other Americans had dealt with In-

\(^{103}\)Young to John M. Bernhisel, 20 November 1850, Brigham Young Papers. Excerpts from the letter may also be seen in the Manuscript History of Brigham Young.
\(^{104}\)"Manuscript History of Brigham Young."
\(^{105}\)ibid.
\(^{106}\)Some of Brigham Young's correspondence with the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, with other public officials, and with Utah's delegates in Congress asks that government officials make treaties with the Indians which would extinguish Indians' rights to the land.
dians, influenced Brigham Young to formulate what he thought was a workable and practical philosophy of Indian relations. He said,

If we can secure the good will of the Indians by conferring favors upon them we not only secure peace for the time being but gradually bring them to depend upon us until they eventually will not be able to perceive how they can get along without us.

He further stated that he wished the natives would

become perfectly dependent and be obliged to come to us for food and clothing, whereas if we drive them to take care of themselves it begets an independent and self reliance among [them] which . . . [would prove detrimental to us as a people].

This philosophy, in the absence of government-sponsored Indian reservations, guided Brigham Young's relations with the Indians during the remainder of his life as he colonized several hundred settlements in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Likewise, this philosophy influenced even his less direct associations with the Indians during Mormon conflicts with the mountain men, Indian agents, government officials for Indian affairs in Washington, non-Mormon immigrants passing through the Great Basin (as the Mountain Meadows Massacre exemplifies), non-Mormon territorial officials, and the army which came to Utah to suppress the alleged "Mormon rebellion." Even after Brigham Young's death, this great colonizer's views on Indian relations continued to have an impact on Mormon-Indian affairs for decades to come.

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These quotations come from a scrap of paper in Brigham Young's papers. Although not dated, they succinctly express Brigham Young's philosophy of Indian relations.

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